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CORRESPONDENCE.

The following letter was written with no thought whatever, on the part of Professor Garman, that it would ever be published. It was in answer to a personal letter which I addressed to the author requesting information for my own use. His experience and rare success in teaching philosophy, and the value that I myself derived from it, has prompted me to request him to permit me to print it for the benefit of others—which he has very kindly consented to allow me to do. It appears exactly as it was written, with no revision whatever.

G. STANLEY HALL,

Clark University, July 23-98.

AMHERST, MASS.

My Dear President Hall:

The problems that you propose in your letter of Feb. 8 interest me greatly, and I am very glad to have an opportunity to state to you my experience. It is a matter I have puzzled over much for the last eighteen years, and I am very far from feeling that the problem is solved yet. I have constantly altered my course and tried new experiments, but still the undergraduate is an uncertain quantity, and methods which secure a phenomenal success with one class meet with much resistance from others.

First, a word as to my methods of work. There seems to be an unavoidable resistance to new ideas on the part of students at this age, a resistance that during the last few years has increased. I have gradually settled down to the conviction that an introductory course ought to be so arranged as to meet this resistance most advantageously. This I have secured by two devices: first, the pamphlet system which I think is as much of an invention as printing by movable type. These pamphlets I have printed at my own expense; they are very fragmentary, taking up a single topic or part of a topic and treating it as one would in a lecture; these I loan to the students, and they return them for the use of the next class. In this way I can state a question without answering it by having them turn over to the next chapter of the book and find the answer given there. If I find the question is really appreciated, the effort is a success; if not, I must approach it from some other direction, by some other pamphlet which shall have enough new material to hold their thought and stimulate their inquiry, and yet, at the same time, focus their attention on the problem they have failed to appreciate. In this way I can keep the class at work and keep them moving, prevent their being taken up with outside occupations and amusements, and at the same time be reviewing more thoroughly work they have partially done. It requires as much skill to keep a class together in the introductory course, to give enough work for the best students and not too much for the less able as it does for the police to handle a large crowd at the time of a public celebration. I can do it with pamphlets, I cannot do it without. If I read lectures before the class to any extent they become spectators, but by means of the pamphlets they get the lecture before coming into the class room, and our time is spent in discussion.

My second device is the order in which our subjects are taken up. Years ago when I taught geometry I found that the students would often times make it a mere intellectual puzzle or mental gymnastics, but that by applying some of the problems to questions in surveying, in astronomy and physics, I could bring the men to realize that in studying geometry they were gaining citizenship in the universe, and they were at once led to interpret their lives as far as possible in terms of these propositions. In taking up philosophy I have attempted to do something of that same kind of work, I present the fundamental positions from the point of view of the history of the discussions in psychology, in philosophy and ethics, and to some extent of political obligations. It makes the matter as serious and personal as possible, and as a result it has often cost the students a very great effort to satisfy themselves instead of simply meet the requirements of the recitation room.

Now in answer to your particular questions I can only give very general impressions.

"1. Why is this (readjusting of their views) necessary, that is, what is it meant to accomplish?"—The earlier life of the students has been one of imitation and obedience to authority; it corresponds to traditionalism in tribal or national existence. The great requisite for a young person is to form habits. I have sometimes been asked to give lectures to the lower classmen on methods of work, and I think it would be very proper to do so, but I have more and more realized that students acquire right methods of work not through explanation but through imitation and discipline. I have had students completely carried away by my lectures on methods of work in the fall term, and declare that "if they had only known that freshman year it would have made such a difference with them," and yet in three months' time the entire effect had passed away, and they would do only what I forced them to do by actual drill. I am confident, therefore, that the earlier education of the student must be wholly by imitation, which should be more or less blind. But there comes a time when the young man must assume responsibility for what he does; there must be self-possession and self-direction instead of dependence on authority, and this is a new experience to him, an experience which many shrink from even in very little things.

Those who decline to follow this unfolding of their nature, and there are very many of them, begin to fossilize. If they are religious they soon become Pharisaical, get lost in particulars, are unable to discriminate the essential from the accidental, and take refuge in doing something, and their religious activity is often times such as exhibits zeal, but without knowledge. If they are not religious they become fastidious in imitating social customs, and very soon develop a degree of indifference towards everything except mere form; they become heartless, selfish, many cynical. There is no hope for a young man at this time if he does not meet the obligations of life with the spirit of self-reliance, but to do this he must have some confidence in his own judgment and the standards by which he judges. This is the spirit of philosophy.

A young man who does not have the spirit of philosophy grows up a woman minus her virtues, he can never have the intuitive power of a woman, but he is sure to have her sensitiveness, her vanity, her fickleness, and generally he will greatly exaggerate these qualities.

It is my conviction that a young man can obtain inspiration, enthusiasm, absence of self-consciousness only by the steady contemplation of great truths; that if he is wholly absorbed in imitation, he is like a person whose whole work is that of a proof reader; if he is

successful, he is taken as a matter of course, and he gets no credit; if he is unsuccessful and makes mistakes he is awkward, he is ridiculed beyond endurance; he soon realizes that the most promising rewards for the most careful efforts are negative, and he soon becomes indifferent, and is simply goaded on from fear of the consequences of failure. But the young man who philosophizes, who really understands himself and appreciates the truth is no longer a slave of form, but is filled with admiration that is genuine and lasting.

This, I believe, is exactly the issue which is settled at this critical period of a young man's life. But the question arises why should philosophy, psychology, and ethics be the studies which most favor self-reliance rather than mathematics or the sciences.

I have often raised the question as to whether I would not let down my course and take a little rest and devote myself to publishing, but I have found that somehow students' minds would be satisfied with nothing less than these most difficult problems. I did not awaken enthusiasm or gratitude until these were mastered, and so I have come to the conclusion that there is something in these subjects which the mind demands at this stage of the young man's development.

It seems to me that mathematics fails to meet the demand for two reasons; first, there is no difference of opinion on all these subjects, and the student does not really have to stand on his own feet; thus it may become more a discipline in ingenuity than in decision, self-reliance. Secondly; he often times knows pretty nearly what the answer will be, and therefore gets very decided hints as to the means, that is, he really has some guidance either from text books or from experience; he is not a Columbus sailing over unknown seas with everything before him untried.

With regard to the physical sciences; there is some difference of opinion here, but his main time is spent in undergraduate work on matters that are generally accepted; he has more or less assistance about the use of the apparatus, and his main consciousness of need is of ingenuity and of quickness, and then the enormous admiration which our age has for the discoveries of physical science give him almost a superstitious reverence for anything that can be called scientific. I mean by that that he accepts a great many positions in science without really testing them, and thus he almost gets back into the imitative work again; but when he comes to philosophy it is a new world, the trend of public opinion, especially of society life with which he is most familiar, is not in that direction; it requires something like the heroism which was demanded of Luther, and of the anti-slavery leaders for him to attempt the positions which even in an undergraduate study are forced upon his attention, and he cannot follow authority, there is so much difference of opinion. He is obliged, therefore, to weigh evidence and to let himself down with all his weight upon his own feet. It takes me six months to bring even the better men in the class up to a place where they will really weigh evidence; when their attention is called to it, the issue is forced and they are greatly surprised to find the extent to which they have blindly followed authority, they are almost as frightened as some horses are when the blinders are taken off. But when the idea fairly dawns upon them that true scholarship consists not in some mystical quality of genius which ordinary men do not possess, but in simple honesty to one's self in following out the Cartesian Golden Rule, then they experience a new birth, they are no longer boys or slaves, but men. If they attain citizenship in the kingdom of truth they perceive that the difference between the greatest and the smallest consists only in the quickness and comprehensiveness and thoroughness and humility of

their work. Truth to one man is truth to all if they can get exactly the same data and exactly the same standards. Henceforth, they call no man master or lord for all are brethren.

No doubt a similar development could be secured, if we could only have the right circumstances, by business responsibility, or military service, or by actual professional practice and training, but I think it would be pretty costly, and that the usual percentage of failures would be maintained. Philosophy has this advantage, that it gives the training under such circumstances that the best results can be secured with the least danger.

"2. How should it be guided, directed or controlled by the instructor, *i. e.*, what topics first and last; should it be deep going or drastic; are there dangers, and if so, how avoided?"—The first requisite is success. Power reveals itself only in work done; if the student gets confused and discouraged he is worse off than if he had not attempted to decide for himself.

It is my conviction that the introductory course should always be given by a teacher of the largest experience and greatest power of adaptation. I feel that when the student has learned to stand on his own feet and to weigh evidence thoroughly, and to avoid jumping at conclusions because they appear plausible, that he can be left to the guidance of the less experienced teacher, but that first acquaintance with philosophy is the grand opportunity, just like the breaking of a colt; carelessness here will vaccinate against future success.

The student needs to be taught first constructive thinking; he has been accustomed to a certain amount of analysis. All this, with rare exceptions, is clerical work. He will make a very good table of contents or the outline of a certain argument, but he takes the author's own estimate of each step of his position, and has no power to understand independent valuation. The first thing is to teach him that scholarship demands constructive criticism, and here we must begin with the easier subjects. In my own experience hypnotism is peculiarly favorable for this kind of work. I give them several recitations on the details of hypnotism up through double consciousness in Binet, etc., then I ask them to give me not an outline or table of contents, but such an argument as a judge would give when reviewing the case before a jury, telling them not to go into details, and not to jump at conclusions, and to give the extremes under each type. The papers I get back are a sight to behold. These I criticise, writing in corrections with red ink, and hand back, and then require them to try again. By this time they discover their mistake, but do not see how to remedy it, and then comes a great deal of very frank talk. Then they realize for the first time how much they are guided by authority and imitation and indeed begin to wonder if there is anything else in scholarship. Then I give them in very brief form my own argument, and then follows a most interesting series of comments which generally agree in this particular: "how could we be expected to have discovered anything like that in the reference-books?" and it very soon becomes formulated into the idea that the standards for undergraduate thinking ought not to be the same as that which is demanded of the teacher. In other words, there is a difference of kind between the teacher and the taught.

I believe the great secret is to take some one subject and make a success of that rather than to go from subject to subject. Hence, I work over this particular problem until the men come to see clearly that it is simply an unfolding process, and that they could have worked it out if they had only weighed evidence. We then take up a series of subjects in psychology, and show their ethical and practical

significance, and also the places which they have occupied in historical discussion. Each subject has a two-fold significance; first, it is not so difficult but that the students can, in time, realize just what constructive work here means. Secondly, each subject points in a particular direction, namely, towards the unity of our mental life, the fact that our practical activity is founded on our mental constitution; and the students are brought to realize that simple things are more complex than they seem, and therefore more thorough study will be demanded, purely from practical considerations if one has no higher motive. I feel that the work should be thorough or not touched at all. Some subjects may be merely referred to, but it is better to take one subject and do it thoroughly, and show the students what it involves, and the true methods, than give the results of investigation without giving the processes.

Just here I have to fight strenuously against the students using the class room as a pony; when a problem is given out and the data presented in the class room, they must attempt the solution for themselves, and not wait and get the results presented in the class room. Hence, I require frequent papers written on topics by the whole class before the discussion is completed in the recitation. By means of the pamphlets I am able to do this, but if the pamphlets were bound up in a volume the students would look over into the next chapter and save themselves trouble. The dangers that are most serious, in my judgment, are demoralization and discouragement, such as may come over an army in a panic. Students are very quick to suspect a sleight-at-hand performance on the part of the teacher, and that some other author could get just the opposite results, and instead of weighing evidence they fall back on ingenuity and sophistry. I believe every student has to go through a period of sophistry if he fairly faces this work, and I believe in having this fit of measles early and have it out of the way, but for some little time the teacher has got to be on the lookout for the sequelæ, and he must not trust too implicitly to students when they say they are through with them. They are quite likely to enjoy the position of uncertainty, and use it to justify themselves if they have any immoral tendencies, but if you can get the man so far along as to make him have confidence in the power of weighing evidence, to realize how much civilization owes to it, how every department of life can be progressive only through scientific thinking, and then make it a moral question, and show that intellectual honesty and supreme choice of truth for truth's sake, and determination to follow evidence to the best of one's ability, is the great line of cleavage between the saints and the sinners; if you can force the issue here and win, then the class are entirely different afterwards. I do not believe without this moral battle, without considering the ethical phases of the question, it would be possible to get the best intellectual results.

3. "What would be one or two good literary treatments of this question of epistemology, *i. e.*, is a course in Locke, Berkeley and Hume the best to begin with and is Kant a final solution?"

Having taken them through a discussion of some of the simpler questions in psychology, our work centers around the doctrine of association and habit as is presented by James, and the men are made to realize how much of our life has a physical basis, especially by the study of pathological cases. We now face the problem: is it all dependent on brain action? If so, what would be the consequences? Up to this point they have had the point of view of physics and the natural sciences. Epistemological work is fairly before us when we take up Berkeley. I should prefer Berkeley and the Sophists taken

up together. The great thing is to force upon a young man's mind a problem in all its seriousness. I do not feel that Locke is an economy of time for an introductory course unless some of the men hold to innate ideas. Therefore we begin with Berkeley, then take Hume with John Stuart Mill's additions, then selections from Spencer until we get before the student the problem of our standards of thought, whether these might not be wholly relative or due to association, and show what would be the effect on ethics and religion. Then we take up the study of reflex action, the automaton theory, and psychological problems. This brings the matter home to the students, till it seems as though physical habit (heredity and associations of ideas) would account for our most sacred convictions. The reason why I make this so strong is because at present there are very many outside enterprises distracting the students' attention. Unless philosophy is a life and death matter you will not get the thorough work, the hard work which the students really need to do. He soon gets a faith in the teacher, and that a man who is able to present so clearly the argument on a few points which they have had will be able to guide them on all the difficult ones, and that somehow they will come out right anyway. So when they get into the larger questions and do not see the bearing of some of the problems, they are in danger of making drudgery out of it instead of philosophy and so lose their inspiration.

Our next step is then to bring before them the questions: can the brain weigh evidence? Can the brain give us personal identity? Can the brain give us memory in the true sense of that word? Can we account for the existence of error if we have only brain action? Here we take up such discussions as are given in Clifford and James's "mind stuff," and review Herbert Spencer until the men clearly realize the position which Wundt brings out, that there must be such a thing as psychical causality. This comes to them like a revelation. We are then ready for Kant and at the same time for the study of particular questions in physiological psychology. Then the men see what the fusion of sense perceptions means, also what problems are at issue in space perception, for instance, or in time perceptions, and most of all in attention and volition. It does not seem to me that the main problems of experimental psychology should come at the beginning of the course; they surely get a double meaning when taken up at this stage.

4. "Is it possible to find the way out of agnosticism or could an ingenuous soul be left to wrestle with it?"

My feeling is if the best students have the right method of work and have the spirit of investigation, agnosticism would in time work itself out if left unsolved, but that the average student needs help, at least to this extent to show him that he cannot make any hypothesis which will be a reasonable basis for his knowledge of the physical world and of natural science that does not involve as its basis something more than the physical world. I believe the place to take this up is with Kant's Practical Reason, and if this is fully appreciated the students will find no great difficulty in theism, at least as the only hypothesis which gives any basis for science and human life. It is so easy for them to feel that our knowledge of the material world is simple, and our knowledge of moral obligation and of spiritual life a mere matter of opinion that I cannot content myself with leaving the class until they realize just the reverse. It is not very hard to make the students understand that our standards of thinking are spiritual, and that unless we can use these standards in judging others, and in interpreting nature, and in interpreting human life and human destiny we are guilty of the worst form of anthropom-

orphism, an anthropomorphism for which there is not the slightest justification. But with the application of these standards moral obligations are authoritative and society cannot dispense with them. The class derive great inspiration from this point of view. It converts them from disciples to apostles, and it helps them in every position of graduate work, in law, in literature, in theology, and in medicine. The business world is the severest trial, and yet nowhere do they need this point of view so much as when they are tempted to sacrifice everything to mere accumulation of wealth.

The great need of our students from a practical point of view is an ideal; the great danger is that they will become visionary. Hence, I cannot let them go until I hold out before them the ideals of a spiritual life, and then make such a practical application as will enable them to understand the evolution of religion, that is, how it was possible for a divine being to tolerate slavery, polygamy, etc., provided these are wrong. I show them that an ideal is like the north star which the colored slave would follow, not with the expectation of ever reaching the star but under the hope that by following it he might better his condition. I bring in the laws of unfolding of the life of the individual and of the community, until the men discover that the great question of human history is not so much "where we are as whither we are drifting," and that time is required for all progress. Without this discussion the men would at first be idealists and visionary and then get discouraged and wonder whether their college course had not been too optimistic, and whether finite human beings are not powerless to hasten the evolution of the race. This will lead to hope and lessen their indifference as citizens.

I fear I have wearied you by my long letter. I do feel that the teaching of philosophy is an opportunity which no other study offers. I feel that the student who has been through these doubts and worked them out for himself has learned the strength and at the same time the limitations of the finite, and that he will have a degree of courage and patience in adversity, a degree of self reliance and humility which others can secure only by those peculiar experiences which occasionally occur in actual business or politics, or the professional life. The student who has taken philosophy realizes how the part is to be estimated in the light of the whole, he realizes this more completely than he could from any other study. He also realizes the dignity which a part may secure from the grandeur of the whole to which it belongs, and that the little things in life have a depth of meaning for him which they could not have if he had not this point of view. There are considerably many who, in spite of all the teacher can do, use the class room as a pony, who, therefore, get only some of the benefits of the course, but it shows in all their other work. The habits that are formed in college are so persistent that the student does not readily change them after he goes out.

Hoping that I have not tired you by my long account, and that I have not given too much emphasis to the personal equation, I am

Most sincerely yours,

CHARLES E. GARMAN.